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# The Team Europe approach and European coordination of development cooperation: Opportunities for Spanish Cooperation

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## Executive summary

The ‘Team Europe’ approach was created in 2020 in the field of international and development cooperation, as a political impetus from the leaders of the Member States and the European Union institutions (European Commission and Joint External Action Service) to deepen their joint work agenda. This momentum comes in response to the huge external action and international cooperation challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis on the international development agenda, in particular the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

This new and visible working methodology has so far been reflected in the joint response to the COVID-19 crisis, the programming of European Union aid (Global Europe Instrument 2021-2027) and the development of 150 Team Europe Initiatives worldwide, and is progressively being applied to other actions, such as the EU Member State coordination with international development organisations and multilateral conferences, or the *Global Gateway* initiative.

Given the novelty of the concept, this document explores its origin, description and development so far, as well as its articulation with other concepts of European and international cooperation, such as the EU’s “Working Better Together” agenda, the joint programming and the Aid Effectiveness Agenda. This is a dynamic and fully developed concept whose real meaning and impact will have to be analysed in the coming years.

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\* **Manuel Iglesias Roa** and **Susana Jiménez Gandarias** are civil servants of the European Commission and the Spanish Government respectively. The opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily represent the position of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, the European Commission, or the CIDEAL Foundation. We are grateful for the comments and information received from our colleagues at the European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships (especially Félix Fernández-Shaw, who came up with the idea), the Secretary of State for International Cooperation, the Directorate-General for Sustainable Development Policies (DGPOLDES), the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP).



## 1. Origin of the Team Europe concept

The Team Europe (hereinafter referred to as “TE”) concept and working methodology has been gradually defined and used since the Communication from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the ‘EU Global Response to COVID-19’ in April 2020<sup>1</sup>:

*“The EU’s response follows a Team Europe approach. It draws contributions from all EU institutions and combines the resources mobilised by EU Member States and financial institutions, in particular the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Working together, Team Europe can muster a critical mass that few others can match.”*

*“(…) The Team Europe approach will provide a single policy framework for all the European external response in support of partners to address the coronavirus crisis, a joint strategy based on coherent and common priorities and financial packages, and coordination in multi-lateral response.”*

The Council conclusions of the 8th June 2000 in the overall Team Europe Global Response to COVID-19 subsequently endorsed and gave more weight to the above proposals of the High Representative<sup>2</sup>. The Council conclusions of 23 April 2021<sup>3</sup>, devoted exclusively to the Team Europe concept, are the document that describes and gives the most political authority to date:

*“...the Team Europe approach helps to demonstrate the EU’s global leadership, responsibility and solidarity. Team Europe aims to jointly support partners in overcoming urgent needs and mitigating the health, social, economic, humanitarian, security and political impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (...)”.*

*“The Council underlines that Team Europe contributes to the promotion of EU values and interests worldwide and that its objectives are fully in line with the New European Consensus on Development and the EU’s Global Strategy. The Council emphasises that Team Europe’s in-*

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1. Joint Communication from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 8.4.2020. European Commission, JOIN(2020) 11 final.

2. As a further sign of the strong political push, on 20 November 2020, the High Representative, the Commissioner for International Partnerships and all the Ministers or Secretaries of State responsible for international cooperation of the 27 Member States (in the case of Spain the Minister for Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation) co-signed and submitted a letter entitled ‘The Team Europe approach for COVID-19 and beyond’. The letter is addressed to all EU Delegations, Member States Embassies and headquarters of all EU financial institutions and development agencies.

3. Council conclusions 7894/21.

*terventions aim at sustainable global recovery in the spirit of “building back better and greener”, achieving the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs as well as the goals of the Paris Agreement.”*

Finally, the Council Conclusions of 22 June 2021<sup>4</sup> “encourage Member States and the Commission to step up their efforts to cooperate better, including through joint programming”, and also expresses commitment “to the Team Europe approach, initially developed as part of the EU’s global response to COVID-19, to define a collective European response (...) to help partner countries achieve sustainable recovery in line with the implementation of the SDGs”.

## 2. Implementation of the Team Europe concept

The Council conclusions of 22 June 2021 on Team Europe point to a first list of areas of implementation of the new approach:

- Improving global health in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic “and beyond”.
- “Cooperation with and coordination within multilateral institutions in response to the COVID-19 crisis, in particular within the United Nations system and with regard to International Financial Institutions (IFIs)”.
- “Stepping up international debt relief efforts in a coordinated manner in relevant multilateral frameworks, such as the IMF/World Bank and the G20/Paris Club initiatives”.
- The programming of EU funds under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), through the ‘Team Europe Initiatives’ and ‘Joint Programming’.
- The strategic communication and public diplomacy of the ‘Joint Engagement as Team Europe’, the ‘widespread use of the new Team Europe visual identity’ and the task of ‘actively fighting disinformation’.

This is a dynamic and evolving process, as noted in the above-mentioned Conclusions document of April 2021<sup>5</sup>, which has become part of the work acquis and terminology of the multiple documents<sup>6</sup>, administrative and working processes of the EU institutions and the Member States (MS)<sup>7</sup>.

4. Council Conclusions 9850/21 on A comprehensive approach to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: building back better after the COVID-19 crisis.

5. Idem.

6. See for example the Council Conclusions on Africa of 30th June 2020.

7. “The two big brands of the new European cooperation”, Angeles Moreno Bau. The Vanguardia 25.06.2021.



The EU's *Global Gateway* Strategy of December 2021<sup>8</sup>, which articulates much of the “European offer” to its partners with financial investments in infrastructure, health systems, education and research, while projecting its policies and values, as well as its decline at the recent European Union - African Union Summit, are also significant examples of the concrete implementation and adaptation of the TE approach so far. The crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine and their neighbouring countries in turn present new challenges and joint work opportunities for the TE<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. The Team Europe approach in response to COVID

To put the challenge we have faced into context, we know that COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), which was first detected in China in December 2019, namely in the Chinese municipality of Wuhan and quickly spread to other regions of China and the world. On 11th March 2020, the WHO declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.

The EU contributes directly to the WHO's global response as the world's leading development cooperation partner, and adopts in April 2020 a series of urgent measures to support its partners in response to the pandemic, with implications for social stability and security, providing the best version of European solidarity.

Charles Michel, President of the European Council, said: *“Only a shared spirit of global solidarity and responsibility will defeat the COVID-19 crisis.”*

The EU response is therefore based early on the team spirit under the Team Europe approach, offering a comprehensive, rapid, solidarity-based, massive and coordinated response to protect all people, save lives and address the impact on different dimensions, in particular by responding to the economic repercussions. At a time of international solidarity and leadership, President von der Leyen launched Team Europe on 8th April 2020 in response to COVID-19 to support EU partner countries fight the pandemic and its consequences, on the premise that “no one is safe until we are all safe”.

In line with the approach agreed upon at the G20 and promoted by the UN, the EU response focuses on the humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences of the crisis. It addresses short-term emergency needs as well as longer-term structural impacts on societies and economies, thereby reducing the risk of destabilisation. It reinforces both governmental and non-governmental actions.

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8. Communication of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 1.12.2021, Join (2021) 30 final.

9. “Global or regional donor? The European Union's international cooperation in the aftermath of the crisis in Ukraine”. Iliana Olivié. El País, 15.03.2022.

Initially, the European Commission co-organised the Coronavirus Global Response Pledging Conference, which succeeded in forging unprecedented political collaboration between more than 50 governments, and non-profit and private donors from all continents. Through a Marathon and the Pledging Summit “Global Goal: Unite For Our Future”, a total of EUR 15,900 billion was raised for research, universal and equitable access to vaccines, diagnosis, treatment and strengthening of sustainable health systems in partner countries.

As Team Europe, it has managed to mobilise support for more than 130 countries to address the pandemic and its consequences. Initially, that support amounted to a commitment of approximately EUR 20,000 million, and by April 2021, this figure had been considerably exceeded to EUR 46,000 million in total. This support focuses mainly on the following areas:

- i. Emergency response to the immediate health crisis and the resulting humanitarian needs — EUR 1,800 million.
- ii. Strengthening health, water and sanitation systems and research capacities of partners to cope with the pandemic and their preparedness— EUR 6,300 million.
- iii. Mitigation of the immediate socio-economic consequences — EUR 25,800 million.

The most recent disbursement situation in relation to the commitments made by region in April 2021<sup>10</sup> confirms the credibility of the European response, and is as follows:

- Neighbourhood: EUR 10,300 million disbursed out of a total of EUR 13,800 million.
- Sub-Saharan Africa: EUR 6,700 million out of a total of EUR 8,100 million.
- Western Balkans and Turkey: EUR 4,900 million out of a total of EUR 5,800 million.
- Asia and the Pacific: EUR 2,700 million out of a total of EUR 3,200 million.
- Latin America and the Caribbean: EUR 1,500 million out of a total of EUR 3,000 million.
- Africa, Caribbean and Pacific, regional: EUR 445 million out of a total of EUR 658 million.
- Overseas territories and Greenland: EUR 203 million out of a total of EUR 627 million.
- Global programmes: EUR 5,100 million out of a total of EUR 7,500 million.

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10. EC COVID-19 press release, - [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/team-europe-eu34-billion-disbursed-so-far-tackle-19-partner-countries\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/news/team-europe-eu34-billion-disbursed-so-far-tackle-19-partner-countries_en)



In addition, Team Europe's contribution includes guarantees (EUR 2,100 million out of EUR 3,300 million).

The EU has also played a leading role in setting up the COVAX mechanism (through the ACT-Accelerator programme), the only global initiative to support the equitable distribution of vaccines worldwide, with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries. By June 2021, Team Europe's contribution to COVAX exceeded EUR 3,000 million, strengthening the EU's position as the world's largest vaccine donor and exporter.

To summarise, in the words of the Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen: *"Team Europe responded by pooling our expertise and resources, drawing on our respective strengths to deliver more targeted support with greater impact. We have also adapted EU programmes to better respond to developing countries' needs. Team Europe can be proud to have mobilised such a substantial package in just one year to support our partners around the world."*

In Spain, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation launched in July 2020, in a groundbreaking move, the Spanish Cooperation's Joint Response Strategy to the COVID-19 Crisis, which steered Spanish Cooperation to help address the enormous challenges created by the pandemic. In January 2021, also in a pioneering move, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ministry of Health published the 'Solidarity Vaccination' Universal Access Plan to help ensure fair, affordable and universal access to vaccines as a global public good. Both documents were developed by the Directorate-General for Sustainable Development (DGPOLDES) in cooperation with all the players in the Spanish cooperation system.

These documents have made it possible to guide the activity carried out by the Spanish Cooperation and Administration as a whole, which has managed to position our country as a key player in the international fight against the pandemic.

In 2020, the Spanish Cooperation as a whole mobilised an estimated total of EUR 1,720 million to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. These amounts are updated on a regular basis as the crisis evolves, given the uncertainty associated with it and in response to the follow-up provided by the EU. By the end of 2021, the total commitment made by the Spanish public administrations as a whole was reported to amount to just over EUR 2,500 million, with the final disbursement being close to EUR 2,000 million (EUR 1,985 million), based on data collected from the General State Administration, the Autonomous Communities (ACs) and the Local Authorities.

To address these challenges, the Strategy sets out three priorities in line with the priorities of the EU's global response to COVID and the Team Europe approach: saving lives and strengthening public health systems; protecting and restoring rights and capacities; and preserving and transforming socio-economic systems, restoring the productive fabric and strengthening democratic governance. This Strategy is also based on a vision for the future when the pandemic is over, which consists of urgently addressing the systemic transformations needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda's SDGs. It is governed by 12

principles, including point 4: Act under “Team Europe” by strengthening the leadership of the EU Delegation (EUD) in each country.

The long-term Strategy will have to be reflected in the next Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation, so this reflection should be in the medium term. The evaluation of the Strategy will be carried out in the first half of 2023, due to the fact that the evolution of the pandemic itself has had a direct impact on its implementation, which will have to be adapted to the health context and monitoring with figures. We will then have sufficient data to carry out a full analysis.

## 4. Team Europe Initiatives

### 4.1. Origin and definition

The Team Europe Initiatives concept (hereinafter referred to as TEIs) results from the application of the Team Europe approach to the programming<sup>11</sup> and implementation process of EU funds under the recently adopted Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)<sup>12</sup>, through which most of the EU’s international cooperation is articulated in the EU budget<sup>13</sup>, and with similarities and precedents in the process of joint programming of aid between the EU and the Member States<sup>14</sup>.

11. [https://www.dev-practitioners.eu/media/event-documents/JOINT\\_presentation\\_on\\_programming\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.dev-practitioners.eu/media/event-documents/JOINT_presentation_on_programming_guidelines.pdf)

12. For a detailed explanation, see: “The new Global Europe instrument and its practical implementation in the external cooperation of the European Union”, Javier Raya Aguado and Bernard San Emeterio Cordeiro, CIDEAL Foundation, 2021.

13. After several stages of internal approval and consultation with the EU Member States, the result is a total of 93 regional and thematic indicative programming documents, available on these websites: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/global-europe-programming\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/global-europe-programming_en) [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndic-global-europe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/funding-and-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndic-global-europe_en)

14. “Working Better Together as Team Europe Through joint programming and joint implementation”. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/working-better-together>



Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (€79,462* million)		
Geographic programmes €60,388	Thematic programmes € 6,358	Rapid response actions €3,182
Neighbourhood min. €19,323	Human Rights and Democracy €1,362	
Sub-Saharan Africa min. €29,181	Civil Society Organisations €1,362	
Asia and the Pacific €8,489	Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention €0,908	
Americas and the Caribbean €3,395	Global Challenges €2,726	
Cushion to address unforeseen circumstances, new needs or emerging challenges: €9,534		

Source: Prepared by the authors based public information from the EEAS and the European Commission.

\* All figures in millions of EUR.

\*\* The programmable parts of the instrument which have been the subject of TEIs are those corresponding to the geographic and thematic programmes.

The first emergence of the concept, under the initial name ‘Flagship Initiatives’, takes place in the internal pre-programming guidelines of February 2020, and then in the Programming Guidelines<sup>15</sup> of November 2020 that the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission send to EUDs. They call for the preliminary identification of up to two initiatives per programme/country of high-impact actions (in terms of development, addressing, e.g., structural “bottlenecks” and/or political leverage) and joint visibility of the EU and its Member States in international cooperation, which embodies its two main features to date.

The Council Conclusions of June 2021 set out the institutional nature of the TEIs and set out the principles and features that define them:

- a. TEIs should aim for the greatest transformative impact and systemic change possible, in line with the principle of prioritising EU policies and strategic objectives and values. TEIs should contribute to the objectives and targets in the framework of Global Europe. TEIs need to be planned in a strategic and coherent manner, linked to dialogues on policy and action and support reforms.

15. These are technical guidelines between headquarters and EU Delegations. For an example, see the previous period on the Capacity4dev page: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming/documents/eu-programming-guidelines>

- b. TEIs need to be adapted to the development needs and priorities of partner countries. They should be designed and implemented through the involvement of relevant partners, including those responsible for implementation on the ground.
- c. They must respect the principles of transparency and accountability, sustainability, effectiveness and results, 'do no harm', country ownership and inclusive partnership.
- d. TEIs need to harness the development potential of the private sector and civil society, and support and empower their independent and active role in democratic transformation.
- e. They should be developed to increase the use of Joint Programming as a preferred approach, wherever possible. They can also build on the bilateral commitments of the Member States and other members of Team Europe. Established joint programming processes should be reviewed in order to increase speed, ease of use and flexibility.
- f. They should be established at country and regional level, or at the level of several countries. Thematic TEIs should be explored on a global level.
- g. They should be regularly monitored and evaluated and adapted if necessary.

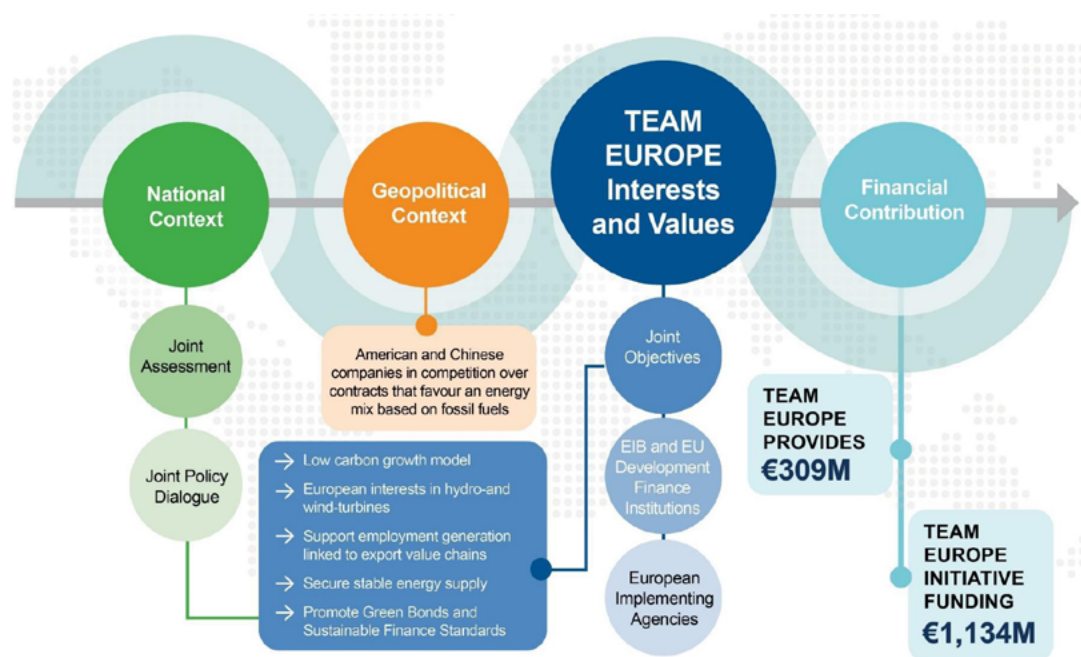
The TEIs are the flagship vessel of the Team Europe approach, partly due to their leverage effect for joint programming and implementation of international cooperation between the EU and the Member States.

## 4.2. State of development, defining elements

### IDENTIFICATION, FORMULATION, VALIDATION (2020 – END 2021)

In the last two years there has been an intense process of “co-creation” in which EU Delegations, the Commission’s headquarters services, the Member States and their cooperating institutions engage in a process of joint work, initially in the form of short documents with the elements set out in the chart below: (1) analysis of the national context; (2) the geopolitical context of the initiative; (3) common objectives; and (4) indicative financial contributions from different Team Europe members.



**Figure 1: Example of elements of a Team Europe Initiative**

Source: European Commission

These TEIs are progressively subject to scrutiny by the Commission's headquarters services and then to a validation process<sup>16</sup> by the senior Directors-General for Cooperation of the Member States and European Institutions. The result, at the end of 2021, and coinciding with the approval of most of the Global Europe Instrument's indicative programmes, is 150 validated initiatives, with the following geographical and thematic breakdown.

**Table 1: TEIs Geographic and Thematic Priority Areas**

Validated TEIs – geographical distribution	Number
National TEIs Sub-Saharan Africa	64
National TEIs Americas and the Caribbean	29
National TEIs Asia and Pacific	16
Multi-country, regional and continental TEIs	20
National and regional TEIs Southern Neighbourhood	11
National and regional TEIs Eastern Neighbourhood	9
Global TEIs	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>

16. It is important to note that, unlike, for example, the approval of the Global Europe Instrument indicative programmes (in which the TEIs are mentioned), TEIs and the validation process do not have a separate and autonomous legal entity.

As an important development in this programming cycle, the TEIs have been reflected in the Multi-Annual Programming Documents (traditional programming exercise) and have also been used to shape and “prioritise EU policies and strategic objectives and values”<sup>17</sup>, which explains their thematic weight.

In line with the stated objectives of the current President of the European Commission to raise the profile of “geopolitics”<sup>18</sup> and “a stronger Europe in the world”, the European Commission services have given a strong push to align the European Commission’s internal and foreign policy objectives, including the “European Green Deal”, the Digital Transition, Partnerships for Sustainable Growth, Migration Partnerships, Governance, Peace and Security and Human Development, which have been reflected in the priority areas of a large number of TEIs. Almost all TEIs also cover more than one thematic priority.

**Table 2: TEIs Topic Areas addressed**

TEIs – Topic Areas addressed	Number
Governance, Peace and Security	46
Green Deal	102
Human development	85
Partnerships for migration	14
Science, Technology, Innovation and Digital	42
Sustainable growth and employment	72
Global TEIs	1
TOTAL	150

Source: own production based on data from the European Commission, Capacity4Dev<sup>19</sup>.

Finally, it should be noted that the process of creating TEIs is not complete. Indeed, there are a number of TEIs that are at various stages of development<sup>20</sup> and others that

17. Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2019-2024: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/polytical-guidelines-next-commission\\_es\\_1.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/polytical-guidelines-next-commission_es_1.pdf)

Commissioner’s Mission Letter for International Partnerships:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/sites/default/files/commissioner\\_mission\\_letters/mission-letter-urpilainen-2019-2024\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/sites/default/files/commissioner_mission_letters/mission-letter-urpilainen-2019-2024_en.pdf)

18. State of the Union 2020, “The von der Leyen Commission: One year on”, page 8: Towards a Geopolitical Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/von-der-leyen-commission-one-year-on\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/von-der-leyen-commission-one-year-on_en.pdf)

19. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/tei-jp-tracker/dashboard>. Almost all TEIs cover more than one thematic priority.

20. At the time of publication and at the next DG meeting in April, 11 new TEIs are expected to be considered.

will undoubtedly develop as new policy and strategic imperatives emerge in European cooperation<sup>21</sup>.

## PARTICIPANTS

The “ex-officio” participants have been the EU institutions, the European Commission, and the Member States and their financial institutions, including the national development banks, as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Participation is and has been voluntary and the process has been open to all Member States, and most have responded positively and even enthusiastically. In fact, many TEIs have originated at the initiative of one or another Member State, with Spain, for example, having proposed several in Africa and Latin America<sup>22</sup>. Participation has been and remains open, with the possibility of joining (and although it is not mentioned, it is understood that it is also possible to “leave”<sup>23</sup>) after its validation and the start of its implementation, and a minimum number of States/Institutions expected to participate has been established in order to try to achieve the greatest joint impact sought<sup>24</sup>.

As a process in full definition and development, there are other operational governance issues relating to the implementation phase, such as the role of the different participants in the leadership and coordination of the TEIs, which are still under discussion and will not be discussed in this document.

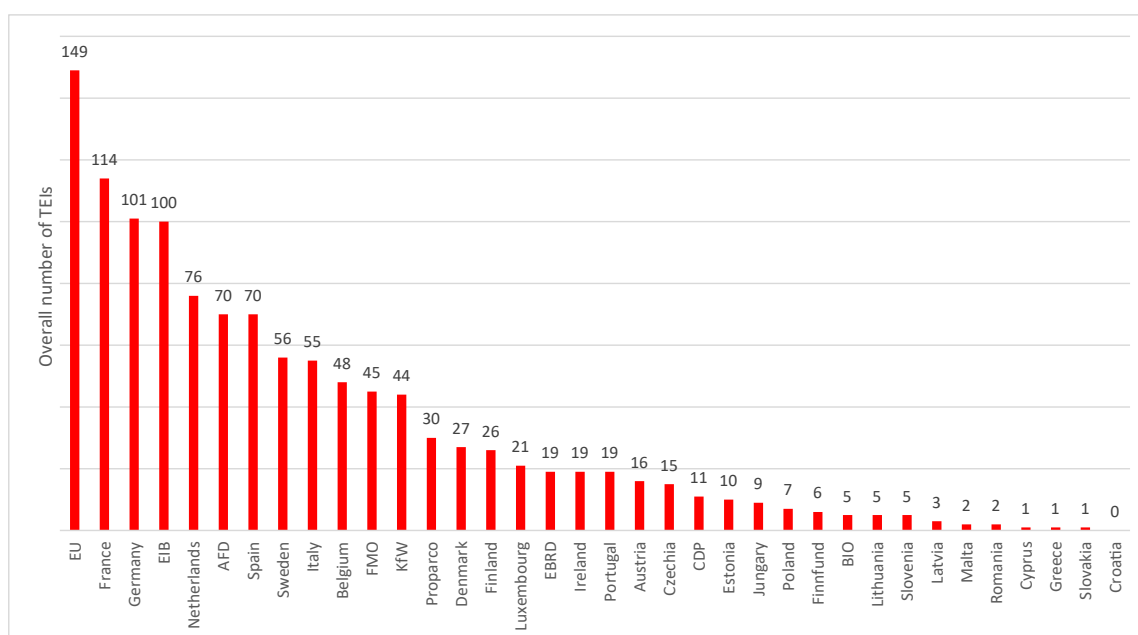
21. See for example “Sixth European Union - African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030” [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final\\_declaration-en.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/final_declaration-en.pdf)

22. Clearly, in a “sum of national and European cooperation” exercise, both the respective size of each state's bilateral cooperation and the capacity of its administrations to participate in the design exercise have weighed heavily. This issue is not unique to the Team Europe process but is largely attributable to the diversity itself among European development agencies. Vide. Fostering inclusiveness in a Team Europe approach. (Alexei Jones, ECDPM Briefing Note No. 298, June 2021).

23. An example of an exit would be a change in the priorities of a Member State's cooperation at geographical, thematic or financial level that would alter the previous political commitment to join a given TEI.

24. Three Member States/National/EU institutions for a national TEI and four for regional TEIs (except for small countries or themes, in which case the minimum is two).



**Figure 2: Presence of Member States, EU Institutions and Development Banks in TEIs**

Source: Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programming Tracker, Capcity4Dev

The Commission has emphasised the inclusive and transparent nature of the preparation of documents for creating the TEIs, especially with regard to the private sector, which allows for clarification and definition of the projects, in particular investment projects, expected to be funded under Global Europe financial cooperation instruments; as well as programming, including partner countries, national parliaments and institutions, civil society organisations (as part of the “CSO Roadmap” that has existed with each partner country for years and includes women and youth), local authorities, the private sector, or non-European international bodies, among others. However, decisions on how to involve these actors in the design of the TEIs have been left to the discretion of the EUDs and members of the TEIs, depending on the characteristics of the TEI, so it is foreseeable - based on comments received from Spanish Development Cooperation - that this process will have changed in practice.

The role as “full members” (i.e., as potential contributors and participants in the “decision-making” mechanisms) of other non-State public administrations (important for example in a decentralised state such as Spain), the private sector and civil society organisations has not yet been clearly defined.

As the TEI process is gradual and evolving, it is likely that the understanding of participation will evolve and adapt to each TEI, where the relative importance of these other actors, particularly non-state actors, will be reflected in one way or another. It is also envisaged that a “Partnership/European Partnerships portal” will be launched to enable EU organisations to “present what they can offer to partner states”.

Regarding the participation of organisations from non-EU member states, the decision will be taken on a case-by-case basis. As one of the objectives of the TEIs is to send a strong message of EU partnership<sup>25</sup>, this will probably be easier in practical terms with organisations from other “European”, but non-EU countries, with which there is a prior coordination process in place, e.g., joint programming.

### TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS

It is important to start with the clarification that the TEIs are not and do not intend to be — per se — joint funding mechanisms (trust funds or similar), but that their primary objective is to mobilise/pool EU and Member State bilateral funding (“parallel funding”) around a common objective, giving them a coherent shape and structure. As a result, each participant (EU and Member State) will have to programme and approve its own contributions according to its own budgetary and programmatic procedures.

Contributions to a TEI may be financial or in-kind, regardless of the form, provided that they are quantifiable. This, therefore, includes grants, technical assistance, budget support, financial cooperation (in the form of loans and guarantees, blending, etc.), exchange of experiences or public sector assistance, among others. Such contributions may come from approved and ongoing programmes, from funds committed but not implemented, or even from indicative pledges (i.e., for which there is no approved budgetary commitment).

The financial commitments of the Member States may include ODA and non-ODA contributions and include:

1. Existing programmes that coincide with the thematic, geographic and temporal scope of the TEI.
2. New commitments/programmes foreseen in the national cooperation plans and approved according to their respective rules and procedures.
3. Future indicative contributions of the same.

As explained above, the Commission has taken advantage of the programming of the Global Europe Instrument to establish a correlation between this multi-annual indicative programming 2021-2027 and the TEIs (detailed at country, aid sector and financial amount level). As a result, the European Commission's Commissioner for International Partnerships has indicated that close to 62% of national programmes would contribute to TEIs, which, if confirmed, would represent a very significant figure for EU cooperation in that period.

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25. See Annex 3 to the note “Team Europe Initiatives. Methodological Note to Support Design”.

Although the Commission is insisting at the highest levels of the EU on the need to specify their financial contributions in order to give credibility to the TEIs, making these commitments is not proving easy for many Member States, for which the new exercise is surprising at different stages of programming and implementation of their bilateral aid programmes and with different rules and practices<sup>26</sup>. The greater role expected for financial cooperation in this cycle, which is more difficult to programme and anticipate, adds even more complexity (and ambition) to the exercise.

This issue has also provoked some debate on the inclusivity of the process, since, by definition, the Member States with the greatest bilateral cooperation are those that can count on more participation in a larger number of TEIs. For example, some Member States have counter-argued with the importance and value, which is difficult to quantify but sometimes very valuable, of the physical presence in the country, thematic experience and capacity for dialogue, commitments or participation of the public authorities of the Member States, as arguments for joining in. For the time being, the Commission has not established uniform criteria for quantifying non-financial contributions, although it has insisted that, given the intended transformative impact, the total budget must be commensurate with the challenge pursued.

#### COMMON INTERVENTION LOGIC, RESULTS TABLE

As is common in the world of cooperation, the Logical Framework Approach is being used to articulate and agree on the action, in this case joint or group action, which is intended to be achieved. Both the Logical Framework and the governance of the TEI overlap (and do not replace) those of its components (programmes/projects). In other words, the components maintain their operational independence but share certain elements at macro and communication/coordination/visibility levels.

It is in this context of results that the ambition and transformative impact of a TEI can be verified and where the greater European relevance expected of it is embodied, especially with regard to the dispersion of actions (albeit orderly) that often occur, for example, in a joint programming exercise (see Annex 2).

#### MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION

Contributions to TEIs can include all types of implementation modalities and procedures specific to each participating Member State and EU institution, although the TEI principles call for an intelligent mix of the different modalities of the TEI partners.

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26. The lack of synchronisation of the programming and budgetary cycles of the EU and each Member State was already highlighted in the 2016 Evaluation of the EU Joint Programming Process of Development Cooperation (2011-2015) Final Report, ADE, March 2017.

Although the TEIs do not aim for joint implementation, we believe that they do create great opportunities for the various forms of joint implementation available. If this option is confirmed, we would expect the TEIs to have an important additional added value in the agendas of working better together and aid effectiveness.

### **POLICY DIALOGUE**

The principles of aid effectiveness are fully applicable to TEIs, including their design and subsequent implementation in full and ongoing public policy discussion with the partners or beneficiaries of their actions.

Taking into account the renewed importance given in the new Global Europe Instrument to the “policy first” principle and the intended impact and influence of the TEIs, it is also foreseeable that the joint public policy dialogue will have a greater weight in the TEIs than it has had to date in order to achieve, on the one hand, a greater transformative impact in terms of development and, on the other, to nurture the EU’s policy dialogue with its partner countries in a more strategic way. It will be very important to integrate this dialogue into the implementation modalities of the TEIs, incorporating the knowledge of the European public sector in order to give greater weight, benefit to partners and credibility to these dialogues<sup>27</sup>.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM**

The monitoring and evaluation system, another necessary element of cooperative actions, will make it possible to monitor the actions and obtain results or take corrective measures, as well as, in the case of the TEIs, to measure whether the desired transformative impact and added value are being produced.

The confluence and organisation of programmes and actions also presents an opportunity for the members of each TEI, following aid effectiveness criteria, to group the monitoring and evaluation systems of the various components.

### **COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

As stated in the Council Conclusions of April 2020, joint communication is central to the success of Team Europe’s approach and consequently of the TEIs. A strategic use of communication is sought that contributes to raising the joint and individual profile of each member, as well as articulating a joint “narrative” and response to questions such

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27. See Conclusions of the European Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Development) of 19.11.2021 ([Specialised knowledge of the EU public sector: an essential resource at the service of the EU’s partner countries — Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)) and the article “The policy first principle in the European Union’s external action and development cooperation: a question of values”. Tobias Jung Altrogge. Carolina Foundation, 28 June 2021



as: “What does Europe stand for [through its cooperation]?” or “What is the European [cooperation] offer for the country?”. To this end, a new identity and guide and a visual communication package have been created to make it easier for members to use<sup>28</sup>. However, criticism could be levelled at certain vagaries in the terminology used, in particular the changing or imprecise use of the concepts “Team Europe Initiatives” and “Flagship Initiatives” and their combination with the *Global Gateway* during, for example, the recent European Union - African Summit, which complicates communication and should therefore be clarified and overcome.

**Figure 3: Example of Team Europe visual identity**



#### 4.3. Participation of Spanish Cooperation in Team Europe Initiatives

Since its inception, Spain has shown and maintained its firm commitment to the creation of a European cooperation system and a stronger Europe in the world. Specifically, it has always been committed to and aligned with the EU's Joint Programming.

Spain's position has been to consider that the Team Europe approach is a fundamental milestone in creating a European cooperation system based on shared competences and for a stronger Europe in the world. It wants to maintain a strong leadership commitment as it moves towards the implementation of the TEIs and its role in other initiatives such as the *Global Gateway*.

This has involved Spain's active participation throughout the process of co-creation and validation of the TEIs in 2021. In addition to this active participation in the individual de-

28. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/joint-programming/documents/guide-team-europe-visual-identity-multiple-languages>

sign process of TEIs, an internal prioritisation and harmonisation exercise of the overall process has been carried out, which will enable Spain to adapt its individual commitment and progressively intensify the distribution of the detailed financial contributions to each TEI, which depend on the annual budget cycle.

The selection of the bilateral and regional Team Europe Initiatives presented by the European Commission, selected for the participation of the so-called “Spain team”, has been made in view of the following interests and priorities:

- The strategic scope that Spanish Development Cooperation wishes to confer on a theme.
- Alignment with cooperation priorities (Master Plan, Country Partnership Framework and ongoing development).
- The location.
- The added value for Spanish Cooperation of each of the TEIs.
- The situation of the Technical Cooperation Offices (TCOs), notably with regard to installed and monitoring capacities in the field.

The selected TEIs have been classified by distinguishing the roles that Spanish Cooperation, and in particular AECID, can play in the field through its TCOs with the support of headquarters, including the possibility in certain cases of increasing the resources available to these TEIs from the Agency’s budget, as well as the role of FIIAPP and its capacity to manage and mobilise the capacities and experience of other public administrations:

- Group 1 of selected TEIs, in which it is proposed that Spanish Cooperation assume a leading role.
- Group 2 of TEIs, in which active participation is proposed.
- Group 3 of TEIs, in which participation is proposed but not as active.
- Group 4, which groups together the TEIs in which the participation of Spanish Development Cooperation is ruled out, at least in the first stage.

The TEIs for which the criterion relating to priority SDGs has been taken into account in the corresponding Country Partnership Framework (CPF), also have the added value that this priority has been agreed with the partner country through the participatory process of drafting and approving the CPF. This is one of the values that Spain will continue to maintain.

In this regard, the Spanish Cooperation has repeatedly shared with the European Commission and other Member States the concern that the principles of aid effectiveness

(in particular that of alignment and ownership) are not sufficiently reflected in the TEI process. For this reason, it has been emphasised that the TEIs that have been based on the priorities that Spanish Development Cooperation has previously negotiated with the partner country (in this case through the CPF/ACA ) reinforce the principle of ownership, and this should have significant weight in the final decision.

The specific situation of TCOs in terms of staff, resources of all kinds, as well as ongoing work streams will be crucial in framing this exercise for its successful implementation.

Likewise, the Spanish Cooperation has argued that the need to influence social policy aspects is important if European development cooperation is to become more Spanish. The lack of a greater sectoral weight of social issues in the TEIs presented has thus been expressed, which applies, by extension, to the initiatives in which Spain has shown interest.

As a result of this process, Spain has so far expressed its intention to participate in more than 60 TEIs, as indicated in the following indicative participation tables:

**Table 3: Summary table of Spain's participation in TEIs**

Validated TEIs – geographical distribution	
National TEIs Sub-Saharan Africa	11
National TEIs Americas and Caribbean	27
National TEIs Asia and Pacific	2
National TEIs Southern Neighbourhood	6
Regional TEIs Americas and Caribbean	5
Regional TEIs Sub-Saharan Africa	6
Regional TEIs Southern Neighbourhood	3
Regional TEIs Asia	1
Global TEIs	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>

*Source: Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programming Tracker, Capacity4Dev reviewed with AECID contributions, the list is indicative and some of the TEIs are cross-regional.*

In addition to this participation, Spain is committed to playing a leading and coordinating role in several TEIs. In particular in a regional TEI on the Western Mediterranean and Atlantic migratory route, as well as in several regional TEIs in Latin America and the Caribbean (TEIs on *Inclusive Societies*, *Ecological Transition*, *Justice and Security* and *Digitalisation*), in which it is considered that Spanish Cooperation and diplomacy as a whole, through the network of Embassies, AECID, FIIAPP and all Public Administrations, have added value, presence on the ground and/or demonstrable experience.

The next steps in the process include deepening the budget allocation, sharing the process with all the actors of “Team Spain”, for example, through the Development Cooperation Council, and proceeding with the monitoring and evaluation of the TEIs, forming alliances for their implementation, in line with Team Europe.

## 5. Team Europe, aid effectiveness and agenda for working better together

As is well known, the fragmentation of development aid among multiple countries, public administrations, international organisations, development agencies and civil society actors has had the perverse effect of reducing the effectiveness of the aid provided. In order to try to reduce this phenomenon, the Aid Effectiveness Agenda<sup>29</sup> was agreed at the beginning of the century, which includes, among other commitments<sup>30</sup>, that of “eliminating duplication of efforts and rationalising donor activities, in order to achieve the highest possible performance”.

At the internal European level, the system of competences in international development cooperation is one of the so-called “shared competences” between the EU and the Member States<sup>31</sup>. This means, in practical terms, that the EU and a majority of member states design, implement and finance part of their own international cooperation programmes as part of their own external action autonomously, while another part is implemented jointly through the EU budget and public administration.

As part of the above-mentioned international commitments to aid effectiveness and the interest in more effective European external action<sup>32</sup>, the Member States and the EU have made even stronger intra-European coordination commitments than those made in the international aid effectiveness agenda. These commitments are expressed in particular in the European Consensus for Development of June 2017<sup>33</sup>, which articulates the current common vision of EU and Member State development policy under the name “Working

29. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action: [https:// www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/](https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/)

30. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness includes in particular the commitment of donor countries to “coordinate with each other, simplify their procedures and share information to avoid duplication and lack of coordination”.

31. Article 4(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU.

32. It is useful to mention at this point that Official Development Assistance (ODA) from the EU and its member states represents 46.2 per cent of total global ODA. The fragmented public communication of these figures, and their perception by the international community, recipient countries and public opinion, hampers their use in EU external action.

33. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=legissum%3A4301055>



Better Together”<sup>34</sup>. In this context, joint programming refers to the sharing of the EU and its Member States with a partner country’s national development plan, in a process that has been hugely driven by the EU and has been implemented for years<sup>35</sup>.

Although the Team Europe approach was born later and, initially, somewhat autonomously from the Working Better Together agenda, its nature is essentially the same and it is quickly integrated and articulated within that agenda<sup>36</sup>, although there are some nuances that differentiate them<sup>37</sup>. It is worth mentioning the guide<sup>38</sup> now entitled “Working Better Together as Team Europe through Joint Programming and Implementation”, in which TEIs have been integrated in recent months as part of the Working Better Together agenda and joint programming.

In conclusion, it is considered that both joint programming and TEIs are part of the Better Working Together agenda. Both are valuable and complementary processes, and it is intended that the development of the TEIs will drive joint programming. The specific use of each process will be decided and adapted as it seems best in each case to the European actors involved, in the context of their country and situation. In some cases joint programming and TEIs may be implemented together and in others sequentially, as illustrated in the following figure.

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34. Recital 73. *In response to global challenges, the EU and its Member States will seek to deliver their cooperation more effectively, inter alia by improving the way they work together, taking into account their respective comparative advantages. This includes improving the effectiveness and impact of their initiatives through greater coordination and coherence, applying the principles of development effectiveness and making development cooperation part of the package of internal and external actions to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To be more effective in achieving its objectives and consistent with the overarching goal of poverty eradication, EU development policy must be adaptable and responsive to changing needs, crises and priorities.*

35. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/human-rights-non-eu-countries/ensuring-aid-effectiveness/joint-programming-development-cooperation\\_es#:~:text=The%20programaci%C3%B3n%20joint%20a,consistent%20in%20%20PA%C3%ADs%20partners](https://ec.europa.eu/info/aid-development-cooperation-fundamental-rights/human-rights-non-eu-countries/ensuring-aid-effectiveness/joint-programming-development-cooperation_es#:~:text=The%20programaci%C3%B3n%20joint%20a,consistent%20in%20%20PA%C3%ADs%20partners)

36. “The Council stresses that it is essential to safeguard coherence in the programming of EU funds under the envisaged Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), in particular as regards the relationship between Team Europe Initiatives and the joint programming/“working better together” approach”. Council Conclusions on Team Europe, June 2021.

37. According to the November 2020 Global Europe Instrument Programming Guidelines: “While both Joint Programming and the Team Europe approach are part of the “Working Better Together” approach with EU Member States at country level, Team Europe sets out a broader policy approach that strengthens both national processes and the overall coordination efforts of the EU and its Member States.(...). The Team Europe approach is a way of visibly branding and labelling the joint external cooperation of the EU and its Member States. By discussing and designing together a coordinated approach to key areas of cooperation in support of partner countries, Team Europe can effectively leverage the full range of respective EU and Member States’ instruments, modalities and resources in support of partnerships with third countries and regions”.

38. “Working Better Together as Team Europe Through joint programming and joint implementation”. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/working-better-together>

**Figure 4: Team Europe's renewed cycle from SDGs to implementation.**

Source: European Commission

## 6. Conclusions and opportunities for Spanish Cooperation

The Team Europe dynamic and its implementation is coming into being with great vigour at a time of global crisis in the aftermath of COVID-19, when a European political and operational response is needed to the enormous challenges that put the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Change agenda at risk.

The European response to date has consisted, firstly, of rapidly redirecting existing funds in support of partner countries in health response to the pandemic; and, secondly, of giving a new impetus to work better together in coordinating national and European (EU) development policies and funds, increasing their unitary European perception by recipient partners, their value and impact as one of the tools that contribute to achieving the policy objectives of European external action.

This renewed impetus is being applied to all areas of work in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, starting with the health response to COVID-19, the work and funding of International Organisations and Team Europe Initiatives, in a still evolving exercise.

To date, this work has taken place predominantly between Member States — in its most state-based sense — and EU institutions and has been marked by a strong geopolitical focus and European affirmation, in a historical context of marked strategic competence with other partners and forms of cooperation. This distinguishes it from other exercises such as the aid effectiveness agenda or joint programming, which have a more technical profile and include other non-European cooperation actors in a country.

As TEIs, in particular, move from the conceptual phase to implementation, the role of decentralised cooperation, NGOs and the private sector is likely to become clearer and new opportunities for joint work will be created.

Spanish Cooperation has embraced the concepts of TE and TEIs, participating in their development and even leading the creation of several of them, and has indicated its participation in more than 60 of the 150 TEIs currently validated. This has meant a considerable effort due to the additional work that this has generated with respect to the Spanish Cooperation's own processes and cycles, forcing it to prefigure over several years the programming process that would correspond to the next Spanish Cooperation Master Plan.

It has also faced the other current high priority in Spain, the Law on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity and its associated reforms, which, if confirmed, would entail a very significant increase in Official Development Assistance to 0.7 per cent by 2030 and a greater effectiveness of Spanish financial cooperation and the Spanish cooperation system.

It is hoped that the adoption of the new law, the new Master Plan and the progressive integration of other Spanish cooperation actors will allow for the continued and decisive participation of Spanish Cooperation in this new phase of progressive integration of the international cooperation of the EU and its Member States, which has come to be known as Team Europe.

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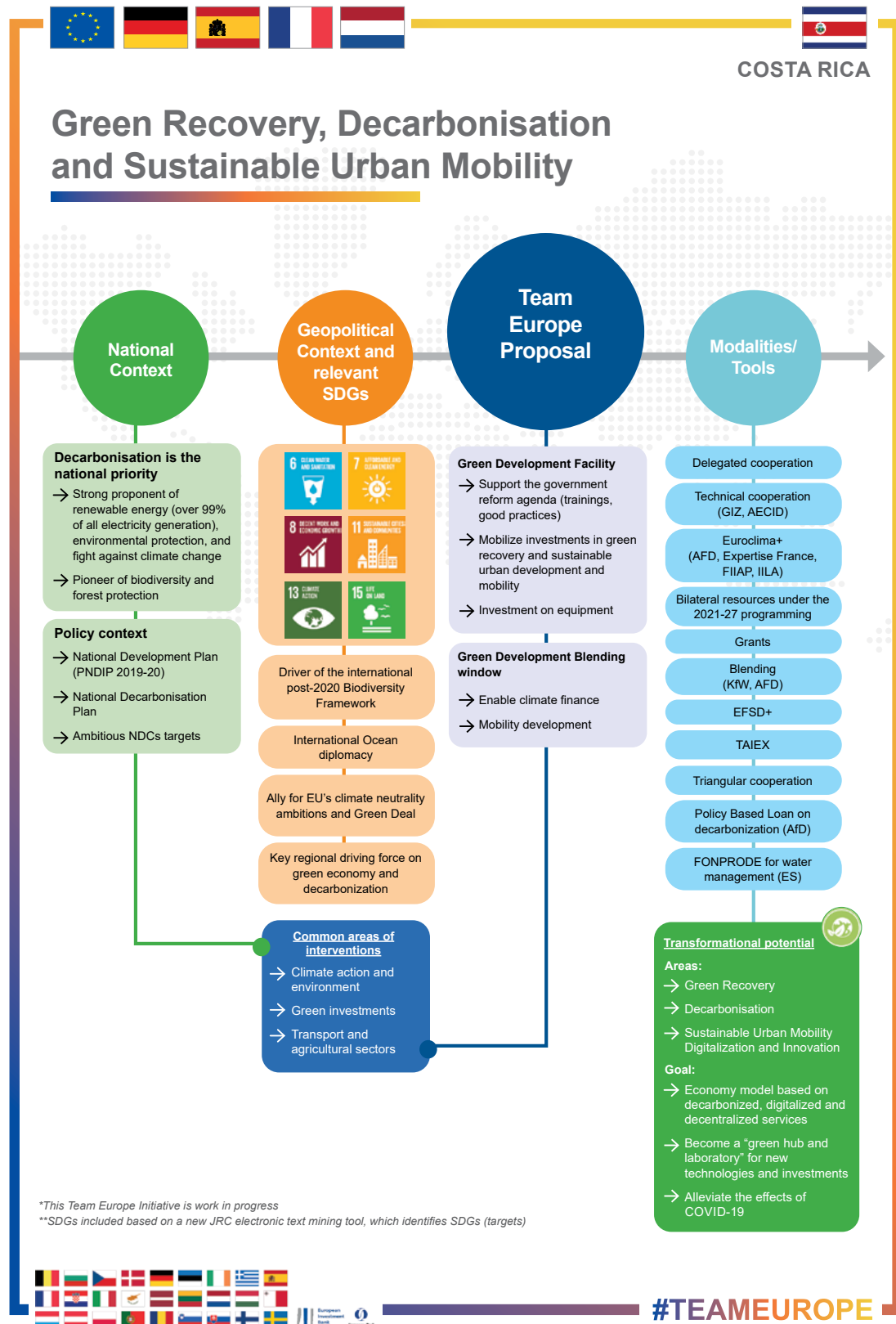
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## Annex 1 – Example of Team Europe Initiative in Costa Rica



## Annex 2. Example of a TEI's Joint Results Table. Source: Capacity4Dev

Annex 7 -Sustainable Agro-business TEIs Intervention Logic						
A productive, sustainable, climate resilient and inclusive rural economy provides employment and market opportunities, ensures food security and reduces inequality and poverty						
Impact	Poverty/headcount Gender (Disaggregated (GD) decrease Household consumption/income (GD) increase					
Indicators	Gini Index decrease Income of poorest 40%/Total income increase US Stunting decrease US Mortality decrease					
Specific objectives	Restored natural capital and ecosystem services and reduced impact of climate change ensure stable and sustainable livelihoods and production systems					
Indicators	Reduced variability in agricultural and natural resource production levels. Natural capital stocks maintained or increased – Forest cover, water, fisheries, arable land Levels of expenditure on emergency relief reduced Reduction in the number of person displaced by disaster Increase in rural household asset ownership					
Pillars of action	Climate Resilience	Environment	Quality	Economic inclusion	Sector effectiveness	
Results	Rural livelihood systems are resilient to impacts of climate change	Rural production systems sustain their natural resource base and strengthen ecosystem services	Increased access to high value domestic and export markets raises profitability and incomes along value chains	Increased production and productivity, better prices and wages and increased rural incomes	Enhanced policy consensus and implementation capacity in the sector	
Indicators	Number of farmers using drought-resistant crops Production volumes of drought resistant crops Number of farmers accessing disaster insurance No farmers with diverse (>4) livelihood sources Number of poorest 10% families receiving social protection transfers	Number farmers using, and area of land under: • mixed systems • crop rotation • agro-forestry Proportion of fisheries, forestry resources and watersheds with local management systems Area lost to coastal and soil erosion Value of ecosystem services and carbon sequestration markets	Number and value of MSME investments in higher quality processing and storage. Number of MSMEs with quality specific contracts with suppliers and customers Quality grade price differential for coffee, cocoa, sunflower oil Number of quality regulation inspections and enforcement actions Volume and value of exports	For Maize, Rice, Cocoa and Sunflower • Production volumes • Smallholder (<4ha) production volumes • Losses • Farmgate price/urban (or export) price Rural enterprise wages (GD) Rural Household income (GD) Farm labour wages (GD)	Sector prioritizes key results and target groups for 'leaving no one behind' % of sector funding delivered through joint modalities Reduced sector financing gap Sector performance data published quarterly Agriculture priorities evident in other sector strategies	Team Europe members participating: MS1 MS2 MS Agency 1 MS Agency 2 EU EDF 1 EDF 2  Modalities expected: - Technical Assistance - Training - Granting - Support - Budget - J-TRX - Technical Assistance - Training - Granting  Operational structure: Political steer: Heads of Mission Meetings Management teams at Cooperation Meetings TEI coordinator (if relevant) "Job title" - "TE member" for instance Agricultural Programme Officer - EUD Policy leads (if relevant): "Team" - "TE member" for instance Climate resilience - MS2 Quality - MS2
Components	<div> <div> Action (Project) Title TE members involved Indicative budget Implementation Modality </div> <div> Action (Project) Title TE members involved Indicative budget Implementation Modality </div> <div> Action (Project) Title TE members involved Indicative budget Implementation Modality </div> </div>					



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